



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PUBLIC REPORT

Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Board Room

Administration Building

133 Greenbank Road

Ottawa, Ontario

- Trustees Present: Justine Bell (electronic communication), Donna Blackburn, Donna Dickson, Lyra Evans, Julia Fortey, Jennifer Jennekens, Nili Kaplan-Myrth, Matthew Lee, Cathryne Milburn, Suzanne Nash, Amanda Presley (electronic communication), Lynn Scott, Sharanya Sivasathiyathan (Student Trustee, electronic communication), Ezio De Stefano (Student Trustee, electronic communication)
- Staff Present: Pino Buffone (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director - Academic), Randy Gerrior (Associate Director, Business Operations), Jesse Mark (General Counsel - Governance & Legal Services), James Proulx (Executive Officer of Technological Support Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Employee Services), A.J Keene (Superintendent of Education), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk (General Manager, Planning/Transportation), Emily Balla (General Manager, Learning Support Services), Sandra Owens (General Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari (General Manager, Communications & Public Relations), Andrea Rahim (General Manager, Research Evaluation & Analytics Division), Michael Guilbault (Central Audio/Visual Technical Specialist), Darren Gatley (General Manager, Governance Services), Kathy Mak (Board/Committee Coordinator)
- Non-Voting Representatives Present: Justin Shulman (OCEOC), Jean Fulton-Hale (OCSSAN), Lili Miller (IEC), Anthony Wong (SEAC), Tahir Yapici (PIC), Tom Holloway (OCASC), Stephen Skoutajan (OCEFTO), Jamieson Dyer (OCEOTA), Chris Walsh (OSSTF), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF)

1. Call to Order - Vice-Chair of the Board
Vice-Chair Milburn called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.
2. Acknowledgement of Territorial Lands

Vice-Chair Milburn acknowledged that this meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Homelands and thanked the Algonquin Nations for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Trustee Lyra Evans requested that discussion item 10.2, Report 25-016: Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Proposed School Boundaries, Grades and Program Configurations, be moved to item 8.

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

Carries

5. Briefing from the Chair of the Board

Trustee Scott reported the following:

- The Education Foundation of Ottawa is in partnership with Stantec, the Ottawa Senators and the Senators Community Foundation to offer an award to graduating Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) students who are in historically underrepresented groups and looking to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based post secondary studies;
- A virtual information night for the 2025-2026 Ottawa-Provence Exchange Program will be held on 5 March 2025; and
- March Break will take place on 10 March 2025 to 14 March 2025 for OCDSB elementary and secondary schools. There are no classes for elementary and secondary students and EarlyOn Centres will be closed.

6. Briefing from the Director

Director Buffone reported the following:

- Gratitude was expressed to staff for their work in producing a comprehensive report regarding the Elementary Program Review (EPR) that outlined the proposed attendance boundaries, grade configuration and program offerings. Feedback can be provided through an online survey. In-person daytime and evening community consultation meetings will be held on 6, 17, and 24 March 2025. Additional details can be found on engage.ocdsb.ca; and

- The 2025-2026 school year calendar is subject to approval by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and additional details for the first and last day of school will be available on the District website.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Report 25-016: Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Proposed School Boundaries, Grades and Program Configurations (P. Buffone)

Your Committee had before it for discussion Report 25-016: Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Proposed School Boundaries, Grades and Program Configurations which outlined the proposed changes to attendance boundaries, grade configuration and program offerings for each of the District's elementary schools as part of the Elementary Program Review (EPR).

During discussion and in response to queries the following information was provided:

- The school grade configuration changes will require adjustments to learning resources and site-based renovations;
- The shift in school grade configurations will result in increased enrolments at certain schools to ensure the site can be sustainable over time;
- Staff have considered the limitations of school facilities and the use of portables when determining the change in school grade configuration;
- Due to the phasing out of the Alternative and Middle French Immersion (MFI) programs and the implementation of an additional community school, some schools can expect to have a higher initial utilization rate; however, this will be temporary and manageable at the school;
- Staff noted that the school capacity is based on a Ministerial formula. Classroom size, utilization, and the age of the school site are all considered when determining school capacity;
- The school grade configuration will benefit lower socioeconomic areas as French Immersion (FI) will be more accessible to the community;
- The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) will determine bus routes and bell times as part of their annual work. OSTA will collaborate with the District when a decision is made;
- The majority of elementary sites currently offer Extended Day Programs (EDP) with the exception of sites that did not show interest or where it is not feasible. Adjustments to child care may be required for certain sites depending on the grade configurations;

- A second report detailing transitional implementation will be presented to the 22 April 2025 Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, and the final report on the proposed model and support for students will be presented at the 29 April 2025 Board meeting;
- Grandfathering all students may be difficult due to sibling considerations and challenge the viability of programs at receiving schools;
- Superintendent Stoudt noted that the number of students currently enrolled in special education program classes who will be moving from Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grade 4 to Grade 8 can be provided at a future date;
- Staff will require additional time to consider the feasibility of allowing students in Grade 5 Autism classes to phase their last two years of school to minimize transition;
- The District will need to consider possible disruptions to students with special education needs and their peers when transferring schools, as well as geographic and program boundaries, if the Board contemplates grandfathering all students with special education needs;
- The District aims to improve programs and services over time and prefers a longer process to phase out the Alternative program;
- It was noted that the EPR implementation is not due to budgetary factors;
- Staff do not currently have information on the potential risk if the Alternative program phase out period is less than three (3) years. Additional information may be available at the next COW meeting on 8 April 2025;
- Due to the proposed multifaceted and multi-staged EPR model and the complex nature of the District, Director Buffone advised that staff are unable to present multiple additional models for the Board to consider;
- Trustees expressed concern regarding the potential impact of changes to boundaries and grade configuration on communities;
- The overarching principle of the EPR review is to ensure all schools have equity of access to programs. Changes to school boundaries and grade configurations will be monitored during the transition to ensure families and students impacted by the changes are supported;
- The EPR will create a large one time shift for students to keep cohorts of students together and establish consistency when moving from elementary school to secondary school;
- Noting the small student population and the school capacity at Greely Elementary School, French Immersion students at Castor Valley

Elementary School will be transferred to Greely Elementary School to ensure the dual track program is sustainable;

- The changes resulting from the EPR will provide an opportunity for staff to refresh the District's approach to teaching and learning with the same consistency across all schools and ensure alignment with the resources available in schools;
- Staff will present a recommendation on the proposed EPR model to the Committee of the Whole on 8 April 2025. Additional information regarding the EDP and transportation will be provided to Committee of the Whole on 22 April 2025, and the final decision on the program model will be take place at the 29 April 2025 Board meeting;
- In response to a query regarding students crossing Bronson Avenue, staff are required to examine east-west boundaries as opposed to north-south to balance the number of students resulting in Bronson Avenue being transected in some circumstances;
- Jamieson Dyer suggested there to be additional opportunities for staff to provide feedback on the EPR and that an interactive map be made available on the District's engage website detailing the boundary when a street address or school is searched;
- Director Buffone noted that the District has scheduled sessions for staff to provide feedback on 6 March 2025, 17 March 2025 and 24 March 2025 in addition to the engage.ocdsb platform;
- The District has not considered reopening school sites that are currently closed; and
- Students may be placed in a combination grade class depending on school population and grade configuration.

The meeting recessed at 9:07 p.m. and resumed at 9:16 p.m.

Following the recess, Trustee Scott inquired about deferring item 9.1 Notice of Motion, Re: Anti-Racism and Anti Hate and item 10.1 Report 25-015: Student Learning Update: Student Engagement and Well-Being to a future meeting.

Chair Milburn ruled the request to be in order.

Moved by Trustee Scott,

THAT item 9.1 Notice of Motion, Re: Anti-Racism and Anti Hate and item 10.1 Report 25-015: Student Learning Update: Student Engagement and Well-Being be deferred to a future meeting.

Carried

- Trustee Scott noted the geographic challenges and school sizes relative to population in rural communities;

- It was noted that First Avenue Public School is currently an English only school. For dual track program to be offered, FI students from other current catchments are to be redirected to First Avenue Public School;
- The Alta Vista area is challenging due to a surplus of pupil places and disparity in school sizes. The grade configuration changes will ensure the schools will be viable. During the transitional period, the District will support families adjusting to the change and focus on childcare;
- Concerns were expressed regarding Robert E. Wilson Public School noting its size and location. Staff advised that there is no capacity for portables at the school and the change in configuration will result in a small temporary decrease in enrolment; however, new development will ensure the school will become robust and FI will be available at Robert E. Wilson Public School;
- There is currently a moratorium on school closure; however, the objective of the EPR was not to close schools but ensure each site is viable and sustainable;
- Kindergarten to Grade 6 schools feeding into Grades 7 to 12 and Kindergarten to Grade 8 feeding into Grades 9 to 12 is the most desirable configuration from a lowering transitions standpoint; however, the District has a number of viable schools with differing configurations;

Trustee Jennekens assumed the Chair.

- Director Buffone noted that the District will manage a short one time change to achieve a greater long term stabilization with the ability to offer bilingual programming system-wide for all students and families;

Trustee Milburn resumed the Chair.

- Currently, the District does not have data on the anticipated number of educators moving throughout the system; however, staff will collaborate with the federations and unions regarding the process for staff movement in the event the EPR is approved;
- Director Buffone noted that having a wider grade configuration of students in Enhanced English (EE) and French Immersion (FI) is not sustainable, and that the proposed grade configurations will allow schools to coordinate resources at the primary level more effectively;
- General Manager Ostafichuk noted suggestions and feedback can be provided through the District's engage website;
- The District proposes to phase out Middle French Immersion (MFI) with the last year of Grade 4 intake in 2026 and younger students will have a flexible entry point into the FI program;

- Staff are considering allowing students in the 2024 Junior Kindergarten class to remain in the Alternative Program in September 2025 with the possibility of limiting enrolment in upper grades;
- Staff has assumed a last year of Kindergarten intake in Alternate schools being September 2025 and limiting any other intake in upper grades;
- The final date for providing feedback on the EPR proposed model will be 25 March 2025; and
- The importance and focus of the EPR was noted and that it would be difficult to assign staff resources to analyze and gather additional data if the Board does not make a decision on the EPR in the current year.

9. Report from Statutory and Other Committees

9.1 Parental Involvement Committee (PIC), 20 November 2024

Moved by Trustee Nash,

THAT the report from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), dated 20 November 2024, be received.

Carried

9.2 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), 4 December 2024

Moved by Trustee Kaplan-Myrth,

THAT the report from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), dated 4 December 2024, be received.

Carried

9.3 Parental Involvement Committee (PIC), 15 January 2025

Moved by Trustee Nash,

THAT the report from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), dated 15 January 2025, be received.

Carried

9.4 Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), 30 January 2025

Moved by Trustee Blackburn,

THAT the report from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE), dated 30 January 2025, be received.

Carried

10. Matter for Action:

10.1 Notice of Motion, Re: Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate, Trustee Dickson

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

11. Matters for Discussion:

11.1 Report 25-015: Student Learning Update: Student Engagement and Well-Being (B. Reynolds)

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

12. Information Items:

12.1 Report from OPSBA (if required)

There was no report from the OPSBA representatives.

12.2 OSTA Update (if required)

Trustee Lee noted that OSTA has not been directed to take action in providing new transportation routes or bell times for schools until the EPR model has been approved.

13. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There was no new business.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Cathryne Milburn, Chair